

Interview with Colonel John A. Des Portes, Commander, 4028 SRWS, Lt Col Joe R. King, Deputy Commander, and Lt Col Anthony Martinez, Commander, 4028th Squadron, by Mr. Ronald Caywood, SAC Historian, on 26 May 1965.

Mr. Caywood: Colonel King, before we were interrupted for a standup briefing, you were talking about the importance of the sextant in the aircraft which is primarily for navigation purposes. Would you get into some details here of the navigation program?

Col King: Our navigation training for pilots, since we only have one man in the aircraft, he has to be the navigator and the pilot as well as equipment operator so it is important for him to understand and to have a good basic understanding of all the navigation facilities that he has at hand so that he can utilize them. We have normally in the aircraft and normal radio, UHF/VHF and HF radios for navigation and communications. We also have a sextant which is foreign to many pilots as far as use and computation that you get from your shots with a sextant. Our navigation section in the 4028th Squadron for the U-2s does, I would say, 90 percent of the flight plan for the pilot in that they draw his general route. They also pre-compute all of his sextant shots so that he can add or subtract from the figure that he should get if he's on course at a particular spot to find out where he actually is. This is done the day before a normal flight. The pilot prepares the run for that, for each target he flies. But most of the rest of the preparation is done by our navigation section so that the day before, say a seven or eight hour mission, the pilot and a navigator assigned to him work for approximately eight hours prior to that flight to prepare him for the flight. That is an important phase of our operation and is a lengthy process in training. Getting back to the flying portion of the training program, we will operate under SAC Regulation 51-19 for our initial checkout. This initial checkout is set up to be completed in four flights of two and three hours duration. All but one of which are low altitude. The third flight normally is a pilot's first ascent to 60,000 feet. He goes up there to get the feel of the aircraft, take a few celestial shots at that altitude and only stays there for a period of 30-45 minutes. And he also works his high compression equipment. One of these flights is a night flight. After he's completed the requirements of these three missions, that qualified him 51-19, for SAC Regulation 51-19, and then

he's qualified to go out in the local area on long missions or training type missions. Normally in our combat ready training period which is the next step, it takes the pilot approximately eight sorties to become combat ready in this phase of training.

Mr. Caywood: This is in addition to the three that you had mentioned?

Col King: Three or four that he will get prior to this 51-19. It's three days and one night in 51-19, I didn't mention the night as the fourth one. So this is in addition to the 51-19 training and during this period he is trained in operating equipment and for ELINT. He may or may not receive training in operating sampling equipment. He definitely has to have training in photography. A minimum number and satisfactory proficiency in this prior to being upgraded to combat ready. He must complete his flight plans, fill out all of his paperwork completely, and be checked on this prior to being upgraded to combat ready status as we call it. It requires that he fly approximately 50 hours in the U-2, prior to becoming combat ready.

Mr. Caywood: Colonel King, who actually passes on his combat readiness, that he is fully qualified, is the final determination to the commander of the wing? Or must he pass, or if he has passed certain specifics of a test, this is done or is there any final determination by a commander?

Col King: Yes, the commander of course is the man to make the final determination but he bases his determination on whether or not the man is combat ready on his standardization board, generally. They are a selected group of pilots assigned as U-2 pilots who give these standboards, his celestial navigation leg that he must fly and completely satisfactory prior to becoming combat ready. After the minimum requirements or upgrading are completed, he doesn't necessarily get a standboard immediately after that, because he is trained until he is proficient in that and his instructor pilot feels that he is proficient to the degree that he can pass this standbroad evaluation that is given him. After the standardization ride is completed, it consists of as I said before, flight planning, consists of buddy pilot for other personnel flying the U-2, and what we call mobile officer, that is assisting him in takeoffs and landings, he has to be proficient in that, and all of

his air work prior to being put up for the standboard when he completes it, then the entire evaluation is compiled into one document and the wing commander is briefed with the standardization pilot and the pilot trainee in his presence is briefed on the outcome of the evaluation. Then he determines and signs, which makes this man combat ready.

Mr. Caywood: Col King, about how long a period is it from the time the pilot who is being trained to combat ready begins his training until he is declared combat ready?

Col King: Well from the time he reports to the wing it normally runs from 90 to 100 days until he is combat ready.

Mr. Caywood: 90 to 100 days so there's probably not being much more than a week's difference in any one pilot's training period?

Col King: Normally there isn't, but again it depends on the weather conditions that he has to fly when he's scheduled to fly, many are cancelled because of the particular crosswinds or the U-2 is critical in the crosswinds, even to people who have considerable experience, but for a new man the crosswind component must be much lower before we will let him fly.

Mr. Caywood: In other words the variance in the time period would depend more on environmental factors in which he is training?

Col King: That's true. Normally when we have selected a man and he's gone through all of this, he's ready for training in the U-2, we're pretty well satisfied that he has capability to complete training in the required amount of time and normal amount of time.

Mr. Caywood: Col King, in view of recent happenings here where a U-2 aircraft actually was refueled, has this changed your training program to a degree, will this become a new requirement in the U-2 training program for pilots to know how to respond to refueling in flight?

Col King: Inflight refueling?

Mr. Caywood: yes.

Col King: We've had to interrupt inflight refueling for about three years now. We selected only a few of the more experienced crews to be checked out in inflight refueling because the number of aircraft that we have which are capable of refueling is limited so that we can keep a lot of the combat crews proficient in this, so we normally carry about seven crews as inflight refueling, we refer to them as special crews, that's what it means.

Mr. Caywood: In other words, you do have enough of this type of pilot and modified aircraft to carry out any higher headquarters directed mission that requires this type of operation?

Col King: Yes, we have gone on exercises with these in the Pacific, can't think of the code name, normally we fly from here to Hawaii and crew rest there and fly from there to Kadena, which is a pretty long flight, so it runs about 11 or 12 hours flight and refueling is required.

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Mr. Caywood: Col King, you commented a great deal here and at length in regard to purely operational aspects of the U-2 training program, could you discuss the maintenance portion to any degree?

Col King: Well my experience as far as maintenance is concerned is limited to operating location experience where the commander is in charge of the overall operation. Our maintenance setup in the 4080th is formed along the lines of the SAC system in that we have the Deputy Commander for Maintenance, under him all phases of maintenance are performed. In the field at operating locations this is not the case due to the limited number of personnel that you have and your smaller units and all of the people are under one commander, so to speak, and the OL commander, he's the DCM, DCO and takes care of the crews also.

Mr. Caywood: He's the chief cook and bottle washer. Col King, do you have a specific regulation in governing the maintenance procedures for the U-2?

Col King: I'm sure that they, that some of the regulations, SAC regulations, governing maintenance would have to be modified to a degree to suit the U-2 and I couldn't tell you which regulations those were.

Mr. Caywood: Do you have specific directives within the 4080th Wing governing the program?

Col King: Yes, we do. We have, each individual in a job has his checklist that he must adhere to and we do this also at the operating location as well as we do it at the home station. He is guided by certain wing directives that are specifically published for the maintenance of the U-2 aircraft.

Mr. Caywood: Well I can imagine, Col King, that you have to have a

specific checklist for each aircraft because isn't each aircraft considered somewhat a personality all its own?

Col King: Well the airplanes were not production line aircraft. They were all handmade and some of them were modified to do a particular job and we have had so many varied jobs. You have to particularly know each aircraft to know what its capabilities are, although a record is kept of what the aircraft have, but in order to schedule the proper aircraft to the proper job, it takes a bit of background knowledge to be able to do this because you want to refuel. At the present time we have two aircraft capable of refueling. You have to know whether they're on station, whether they're in in Iran or where they happen to be and they'd be available to fly on that particular day that you want to accomplish the job, so it takes quite a bit of coordination between operations and maintenance to perform most any job. Although most of our airplanes, in fact all of them, are capable of our primary mission of photography.

Mr. Caywood: Yes. Each U-2 seems to have it own unique history though, doesn't it?

Col King: That's true.

Mr. Caywood: Sepaking of each U-2 being a personality of its own, Col King, do you recall any personal antedotes or personal experiences that might be of interest to us here in connection with your long association with the U-2 training program? Any individual standout or any particular incidents that you think would be of interest to us here?

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They were used to jets coming in and out of there of course, they told him that they acknowledged receipt of the fact that he had a flameout. And he called them again a little bit later and since he didn't think that they were paying any particular attention to him, he told them again that he had a flameout and roger, we understand, which engine is it? Then he told them that it was the only engine that he had. They became quite excited. There are many that can be recalled.

Mr. Caywood: By the way, in regard to this particular one, Col King, what was the results of that? Did he land all right and everything was fine?

Col King: Oh he got it started when he was down at lower altitude and everything was fine, but he did have them a little bit excited when he told them he only had one engine. And the language barrier there was something to contend with at times also.

Mr. Caywood: Were there others that come to mind here? In addition to the Argentine, any particular, say Eielson or experience at Plattsburgh?

Col King: They're hard to recall at times. You stand around and get a group of people and they can usually come up with some good ones but for me to pick one out of the air, I just can't think of another at the moment that would be applicable.

Mr. Caywood: Speaking of these personal experiences, Col King, have you personally had any experience flying the U-2 in which you encountered hostile action?

Col King: I have not had any hostile action personally although we have had aircraft and ground fire on certain missions by other pilots in the wing.

Mr. Caywood: Can you recall any of these particular instances at this time, where they occurred, and any of the details in which involved this particular incident?

Col King: Well, we're all familiar with Major Anderson's flight where

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Col King: They're mostly MiG-19s I believe, and 17s. Although the pilot is unable to determine because of the difference in the altitude that he has seen them, what types they were, we know from results that we get from them what type that they have.

Mr. Caywood: Yes, and could you comment on in what numbers these were in being sighted by the U-2 pilot, about how many has he sighted at one time?

Col King: Normally, there will be only a flight of two.

Mr. Caywood: A flight of two?

Col King: Yes. We also have had out of OL-20, a pilot flying at a lower altitude than the operational altitude of the aircraft to sight some enemy action. He was unable, as far as I know, to determine the exact type of the attackers, what type of aircraft it was. He was interested in getting out of there as quickly as he could.

Mr. Caywood: Yes. He did experience observing or at least an impact of projectiles or in what way did he determine that this was hostile action?

Col King: Well he supposedly sighted the effects of the projectile, whether they be missile or, I thin he felt they were, from the contrails in the atmosphere where he picked these things up. After that he was headed in the other direction and I don't think he saw too much.

Mr. Caywood: Col King, I wonder if you would comment on if you think the 4080th Wing has been over-committed at time with higher headquarters directed projects and if so, how has this affected your primary mission?

Col King: Yes, I definitely think in some of the period in the past four or five years that we have definitely been over-committed. We have had as many as seven operating locations in operation at one time, which not only is very strenuous for the personnel but over-committed as far as equipment is concerned. Particularly maintenance packages should be committed to other things and scattered out about the world so that it makes it a little bit difficult sometimes to keep your plan intact in case of general war. It has also been a hardship on the personnel of the 4080th in that it was manned for three operating locations and when you double that, then that means that the people are away from their home station and their family more than 50 percent of the time which is not a good practice, but it was, I think, most of the jobs that were assigned were very capably done. Because of this we have lost some of the people who would have stayed in the wing and the Air Force but it didn't affect their job at the time that they were doing it. In the past and at the present we have had very good people in this particular wing, the best

wing I've ever been associated with in the Air Force as far as the caliber of personnel assigned to the wing. We are very fortunate in that direction.

Mr. Caywood: Yes, you are. In other words even though the individual was away from home over an extended TDY period, and later did not care to continue an Air Force career, he still did the very best possible job, in fact, a very competent job while he was being required to do this long TDY?

Col King: Yes, almost all of our people have done that.

Mr. Caywood: Would you say, Col King, in your opinion, or should I say how do you think this can be remedied? This over-commitment by higher headquarters projects?

Col King: Well the over-commitment not only affects the feeling of the personnel in the wing, it affects the efficiency of the wing at the home station in that you lose continuity in most of your jobs because you have to rotate your people so often and say, in my case, within the last year I've come back from TDY at an operating location and I've arrived here, one specific example is the last of November, I arrived here one Sunday night at about 9:00 o'clock and I was called the next morning to come to work. I was on leave actually. The reason I had to come to work was the man who was acting as the deputy commander for operations was leaving the next day to go TDY and even though it was neither of our jobs, we had to fill that slot and it just happened that we had a Fifteenth Air Force IG inspection and some SAC IGs were here at the same time and CEG also visited us that week. Well, this is a little unfair in that since I hadn't been here for a period of two and a half months, I didn't know what was going on.

Mr. Caywood: I can see what you mean. It seems to me, and I'd like your opinion on this, that actually the 4080th is probably undermanned and its UMD should be expanded if you're going to have to carry out these higher headquarters special projects, wouldn't you say?

Col King: Yes, that has been discussed at great length but you reach a point of diminishing returns by putting more people in the wing because you have so many people at home then that you don't have a job for them while they are here. If you have enough people to rotate, if you have

an excessive number of OLs and you want to keep these people TDY only three months of a calendar year, then that gives you about four times as many people as you need at the home station, so you can only support them, say in pilots, you can only support them with so many airplanes. So you reach a point where you must compromise in this. The only other solution would be to have another unit or to get more aircraft and have say a larger wing all the way around but we are limited by aircraft as to what we can do.

Mr. Caywood: Yes, I see what you mean. In other words if we expanded the number of personnel, why in order to have good balance here we'd have to increase the number of U-2s in the inventory.

Col King: Yes, that's right. The home station for training purposes and then you would have jobs for your maintenance people.

Mr. Caywood: Yes, in connection with this training program, Col King, would you care to comment on whether you think awards and decorations have been fairly administered and awarded insofar as U-2 crewmen are concerned?

Col King: I think so. The awards have been given to the people within the organization fairly compared with some of the others. Although some missions have been flown that particularly in the early stages of the wing in the, in the early times of the wing, that awards and decorations were not as pronounced as they are today. There's more emphasis on awards today than there was say five years ago.

Mr. Caywood: Yes, and how about spot promotions? Do you think that the 4080th receives its fair share and are these properly, are these fairly administered and awarded?

Col King: In my opinion I think they have been fairly awarded. At times we have had a few, which I think possibly was less than our fair share and a few time, maybe more than our fair share.

Mr. Caywood: Overall you don't think that the 4080th has been improperly treated in this respect though?

Col King: No I don't.

Mr. Caywood: You had commented earlier Col King in regard to the extended TDYs of the crew from time to time. Would you care to comment on how the family of these pilots have reacted to the situation?



Col King: We not only have very fine people within the wing, but their families have accepted this TDY, this excessive amount of TDY, and have responded to it in great fashion. Of course, you're bound to have a few that cause a little bit of a problem while their husbands are gone TDY and will complain more possibly than others, but the families of the men in the 4080th have been outstanding.

Mr. Caywood: Well I understand that to be the case, in fact I've heard it mentioned many times that the families of the 4080th seem to help each other out in a way that you regard yourself almost as a very close knit family.

Col King: This is true particularly in the 4028th Squadron where the U-2 crews are assigned. This squadron has been probably the closest knit unit that I have had the pleasure to be in in my Air Force career.

Mr. Caywood: Would you say, Col King, that probably one thing that draws the 4028th Squadron closer together than probably is the case of many Air Force organizations is that the pilot definitely faces a personal danger on many of the missions in which he is asked, or is directed to perform?

Col Ing: This is surely a factor because even training flights from home station is a little more risky in this aircraft than there is in many other type aircraft. We have been fortunate again to keep our people, so that the people members of the unit know the other people better which makes it a little more close knit and a little better personal relations and sometimes a little bit worse.

Mr. Caywood: In other words the U-2 family had known each other over a long period of time here?

Col King: Yes, our attrition rate in the U-2 is low.

Mr. Caywood: Col King, would you comment on what you think is the future of the U-2 program and particularly do you think it should be modified or should it be expanded?

Col King: Not having the big picture of what other aircraft are supposed to do and in connection with what we have done in the past, it's a little bit difficult for me to answer that but I think there is a definite need for the aircraft. For what it can be used for, it has done a better job say at reconnaissance than any other aircraft that

I've ever known about and it's still being used and is probably the most effective at this time. The modifications of the aircraft, the aircraft have been modified about three times. Improvements have been made so that today the aircraft is much better than it was seven or eight years ago. We have a better autopilot system, we have a better oxygen system, and we modified aircraft for refueling and we modified them to do other jobs as the jobs came up and were necessary, so I think that for the foreseeable future that the U-2 does have a place in the Air Force and possibly more aircraft should have been built.

Mr. Caywood: I see. It seems to me then that the U-2 is a rather unique aircraft because when you think of some of the others, I'll take maybe a B-47, B-52 in the SAC inventory, as we know they are reaching a certain state of obsolescence yet the U-2 as time has gone by seems to improve in capability.

Col King: It has improved in capability but other advances have been made in other type aircraft, defenses against higher altitude aircraft, so that I would say that it does not have the capability, relative capability that it had eight to ten years ago but it is still a very good airplane.

Mr. Caywood: Compared with systems that are being developed?

Col King: yes.

Colonel Des Portes: This is Col Des Portes again, Mr. Caywood. I just listened to some of Col King's remarks and thought that it might be appropriate for me to comment a little bit in order to give credit to, once again to some of the crews, the majority of the crews, as regards the over-commitment which faced the wing for, particularly a period of two years between '62 and '64. There's no question about it, when these people were averaging 270 days a year TDY, something on that order, that this is excessive TDY in every sense of the word. I would also like to point out every one of those crews and many of the support people told me when I first came into the wing in 1961 that we wish we had some activity. Not that they weren't busy and weren't working, but the type of activities they meant was to get involved in something where the going was rough and they could see the results of their effort as it regards a contribution to the national effort and they were talking about

flying real operational missions, that's what they were talking about. And I'd like to say that whenever the time came to man one of these operating locations, I'm sure that there are many husbands and I won't mention any names, who wouldn't want their families to know this, but they kept a steady stream to my door to make sure that they got to request consideration on these commitments. I say this in fairness to them and also to recognize the quality of people that they are. They knew what they were in business for, they were always ready to go, they still are ready to go. And only when it becomes a conversation of comparison to other people's TDY do we give credence to the fact that we were over-committed. I was frequently asked by higher headquarters, the commander in chief, by numbered air force commanders, people like this, how my people were reacting. And I readily admitted that the TDY was excessive but nobody ever complained to a point where it was too much of a factor. They were ready to go, they have gone, they've done a wonderful job and I kept trying to offer them relief just over the horizon although I had no magic formula to determine what our operational commitments would be, but we kept them motivated to the best of our ability and for that big two-year period there, and as you can see now, we are back down to our relatively normal operating posture and I believe that period in there is now history. And they are just as proud of it as they can be and I'm proud of them and I think that it's just a segment of the 4080th history that's gone.

Mr. Caywood: Right. Then Col Des Portes, you would say that during this period of so-called over-commitment that this never really did affect you morale in any way at all seriously?

Col Des Portes: No, I don't think so. It's true that some of the boys who I had on sampling locations, that's not as glamorous work as it is flying operational photographic missions over territory where you need a telex, and I had a little difficulty trying to prorate this experience out or equalize it among the crew force. And in that regard there was low morale problem where one would get a lot on the sampling side and too little to suit him on the operational side. I had a little problem there but over the two-year period everybody got a taste of it, what he wanted, and I'm sure that they're all very happy that they had the experience.



Mr. Caywood: I understand. Col Des Portes there is another area here that I'd like you to discuss in some detail, one of our important parts of the 4080th today, and that deals with the drone operations. Would you describe for us the background for this particular type mission and describe some of the procedures by which these activities are carried out?

Col Des Portes: Yes. The first knowledge I had of this program came in

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were there of DC-130 launch aircraft launching a drone and showed its recovery and given general information on what the capabilities of this drone were, and of course what its mission was. In the several months thereafter the different directives came out which indicated that the 4080th would be involved in this program, around the 1st of July 1963, which as a coincidence was the approximate date of our move from Laughlin to Davis-Monthan. It was not until we came to Davis-Monthan that we owned any equipment in the 4080th Wing. We picked up some drones on our arrival here and shortly thereafter we picked up what is called an MSQ-2, which is nothing but a modified radar bomb scoring system by which we acquire control and land this drone on its return. We shortly thereafter picked up our first DC-130 and started test work down at Eglin Air Force Base on the air proving ground range down there. The tests were in some ways successful, however, we never completed what I consider a test program, an adequately defined and objective test program. We tested different types of drones or those that had photographic mission, those with electronic missions, they're all basically the same but the insides are different to give them different mission capability. I'd like to say that it sounds real relatively simple when you say that you just change some of the insides and go ahead. These things are pretty technical and there are many black boxes, electronic boxes in there with miniaturized, transistorized components to them and a myriad of things that can go wrong. Because this drone obviously is an automatically preprogrammed vehicle and to get the mission accomplishment out of it

that's required and have the launch and the recovery all go 100 percent successful, you have to have a lot of things going in your favor. We never determined from the test program that we had system reliability on all of these components. Nevertheless in August of '64 on very short notice we picked up the package just in a matter of hours from Eglin and deployed it to Kadena, Okinawa, and we put a recovery site down in Taipei, Taiwan, on the edge of Taipei there, the air field is actually Tai Shan Air Field which is Chinese National Air Force, and we put another MSQ recovery site over at Da Nang in Vietnam. We ran several sorties and I would say that we had approximately 50 percent success with these sorties. In evaluating my success on getting a drone back, removing the prize package from it, actually the magazine, we found that the drone had a very good capability when everything went right, that the results of the photography was encouraging, and we, at the same time, were operating, we were continuing to test you might say because many modifications and many recommendations came out of this initial operation which are now being incorporated into the overall system. We were at a disadvantage in that I had very few people in the 4080th Wing who you might say had a blue-suit capability. That applied to myself, my deputy commanders, my maintenance supervisors, right on down. This was a new tool and there was no technical data on the system, and we really had some growing pains. As far as the results, details of the sorties I'm speaking of, you can get them readily from the reconnaissance division and operations at SAC though I have them here in the wing. Now we moved this activity from Kadena down to Bien Hoa in September of '64. Because of the range of the DC-130 it was felt that we could make certain launches from Bien Hoa that could not be effected adequately from Kadena, function of range. The operation has been at Bien Hoa ever since. I should add here that our original concept on this thing when we first moved out of Eglin was that we'd be over there for a couple of weeks. It's grown like Topsy.

Mr. Caywood: Excuse me Col Des Portes. Are these DC-130s actually a part of the 4080th Wing inventory now, they are your aircraft?

Col Des Portes: Yes, that's correct. As of this date we have three, we have a fourth one programmed for the next month or two.

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in the recovery phase, are locked out for a potential enemy to keep them from acquiring this thing. We have a coded signal for opening this security gate, we lock on to a beacon, and through the telemetry between the MSQ and the drone we can reduce its power, program its descent, its route in over our recovery area and normally between five and ten thousand feet above the ground, we command its chute, a big 100 foot parachute that comes, is brought out by a pilot chute, this chute opens, the drone is shut down, it dumps what remaining fuel it has, and is brought to the ground in this 100 foot chute. There's a system on the drone, amounts to a sort of a plunger or needle type affair on the belly of the drone which is supposed to, on contact with the ground, actually the squib releases the shroud of the chute, so that the drone won't be drug on the ground by the surface winds, and this sort of thing. When all of these things work, it's a pretty fantastic operation. We've lost, we've had good sorties, we've gone all the way around, and then had a drone receive major damage because the chute didn't release when it hit the ground. Surface winds dragging it into a ravine or turning it over and this type of thing. But I'm not, my attitude in this program I want it clearly stated that I think it has great potential. It not only has given us some very good intelligence but I think it has great potential through model improvement, system reliability improvement, and this type of thing.

Mr. Caywood: In the plans for this particular project, Col Des Portes, do you expect to retrieve any of these drones in flight?

Col Des Portes: Yes, there is a plan afoot at the present time to take a large helicopter and put a hook arrangement on that so that, conditions permitting, this helicopter can recover the drone in mid-air and bring it back to base which would preclude having to drop the drone in a recovery area with the freefall associated with the 100 foot chute. This is just in the development stages, test stages, and I have people who are leaving here tomorrow, which will be the 27th of May, to go over to Holloman to participate in the test.

Mr. Caywood: I see. Now it was obviously 1964, Col Des Portes, the first few operational drone reconnaissance missions?

Col Des Portes: To the best of my knowledge those were the first operational missions in the United States Air Force history.



Mr. Caywood: And would you say that one of the factors in this project was the safety factor insofar as helping to protect our personnel, I'm speaking of this in terms of our earlier conversations, we have deliberately planned not to expose our personnel to dangers that are not required, ordinarily. Is safety a factor in this project?

Col Des Portes: Well I would say yes to your question. It's of course, this gets into political considerations which I never like to delve into but you see if you can put something over where there's not a man involved, well you have a lot less discussion afterwards if there's not a person involved in this thing. So if you can get your intelligence without it costing you a life or without causing the capture of one of your people, from an international standpoint I'm sure that this is a much desired feature.

Mr. Caywood: Have we worked our plans in regard to the drone missions as to what we would do if these fell into hostile hands? If a drone came into possession of a hostile nation?

Col Des Portes: I'm not in a position to answer that frankly. We've had drones lost through enemy action, I've read newspaper accounts, how true they are and everything, I don't know, where the Communist Chinese have put these things on display in Peking and places like that they claim they've shot down. I know we've lost them. That's about all I know in that regard.

Mr. Caywood: A hostile force would not learn anything more about this project than the configuration of the drone itself then, even if it were captured, would they?

Col Des Portes: Well I guess you're right. It depends on the damage to the equipment that they have recovered. Those people are pretty much experts at copying anything so theoretically if they got one in good condition, they should be able to copy it and there's not too much of a scientific achievement to be able to launch and recover one. I feel that's well within the state of the art of more than just our country.

Mr. Caywood: And to comment a little further, Col Des Portes, on what you said a moment ago. You think that this new project with the drone reconnaissance, this program is promising it will be resolved with these new developments that are coming along?



Col Des Portes: Well I feel so. If you want to look at it a little bit more long range, you have an intercontinental launch platform for a drone. You could get a drone that had the altitude capability and the speed capability that it would survive in, the defenses, it stands to reason that you have a survivable reconnaissance system. And one that could be employed from this country or friendly territory, because of the range of the drone platform.

Mr. Caywood: Are there other agencies involved with this developmental project, the development stages, Col Des Portes, in addition to the 4080th?

Col Des Portes: Not to my knowledge. I'd like to point out right here that drones, as such, that Q2C up there which is now called a BMQ-34A, these drones that we've been using are an outgrowth of many years of experience. The Ryan Corporation has had years with that particular drone which is purely a target drone. The Navy uses them to a large degree. The Tactical Air Command uses them in their annual William Tell gunnery meets and this type of thing. They use them for other testing over in Holland. So there are many drones in use. The United States Army uses them. But the drone that I'm talking about that's being deployed in Blue Springs and whatever outgrowth comes of this program to my knowledge, SAC and the 4080th are the only ones involved.

Mr. Caywood. I see. Col Des Portes, continuing with our High Bar Blue Springs project, would you give some of the details on the training program?

Col Des Portes: Yes, I'd like to point out that there were two crews, there still are, with me and we have carried the major portion of this program for the last three years. These crews were selected from SAC resources and put into the test phase of this program for a year before it was assigned to me. They were TDY for the most of that period, I'd like to state, and since the first year that they were with me they were TDY for four-fifths of the entire year. They are the instructors, the standardization board, the real experience that I have in the 4080th Wing. Now we started in November, we justified increased numbers of people in anticipation of the fact that this Blue Springs package might never come home, for the foreseeable future. So SAC arranged to have

people input into the 4080th Wing to where we've expanded now and trained an additional two crews, we have two more which are in process of training so when we get to a total of eight, we should be able to keep the temporary duty on all crews down to within the goal of 120 days per year. This same applies to the maintenance personnel. We've already received inputs of maintenance people and our first objective was, of course to get the original package rotated home. so we had an accelerated training program here. We used Fort Huachuca as a recovery area and through this accelerated training program, both ground and air and flight and maintenance personnel were able to get this package home around the 1st of December. They have since gone back in many cases, but during the interim we've trained additional packages so in about another month I should have the capability of keeping this operational commitment on a reasonable TDY schedule. Of course, as we go into the future, I'm not so dumb as to think that this is going to be our only operational commitment, this thing may expand into any direction, and should that occur, of course we would have to have follow-on or increased aircraft, numbers of aircraft, increased numbers of drones, the MSQ recovery capability as well as people who are going to man the different locations.

Mr. Caywood: In other words, Col Des Portes, you anticipate that you might have additional operating launches as time goes by?

Col Des Portes: Operating locations for this type of activity. Yes sir.

Mr. Caywood: Do you have a special supply pipeline for Blue Springs anyway comparable to your U-2 supply system?

Col Des Portes: No sir, we do not. I will touch on that briefly. We use a standard Air Force supply procedure and system for the Blue Springs type of operation. In other words, there are special depots on which we draw for certain parts of this package. The DC-130, its engines as an example, come from one area, the drone, the standard parts on the drone, come from another area, peculiar items on the drone come from the factory. But although I have a pretty good priority established for this program, the supply effectiveness has not in any way come up to our supply program for the U-2.

Mr. Caywood: Col Des Portes, one of your very important programs continues to be air sampling and your organization carried the heaviest responsibility for bringing this type of data to the highest authorities in the United

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significance of what they had obtained from these samples. Of course, more public recognition is the fact that the first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award the 4080th received in the '59, '60, '61 time period there was purely based on these sampling results. Then the second Outstanding Unit Award we received right after the Cuban Crisis which was presented by President John F. Kennedy, a portion of that citation included the significant contribution of the unit through its sampling efforts. So I would say that in answer to your question, yes we have been credited with significant contributions in this field.

Mr. Caywood: Col Des Portes, this is just slightly aside from your purely factual account here of air sampling. Would you care to comment on your meeting with President Kennedy in regard to the second Outstanding Unit Award?

Col Des Portes: Yes sir, I don't mind commenting on it. The way this thing came about was a Sunday afternoon at Laughlin, and the big part of the Cuban situation was over, and we had returned to some degree of normalcy. And I was called by the Assistant Chief of Staff at SAC Headquarters and told that there was a very important person who was going to be at Homestead Air Force Base the next day and that myself and a representative contingent from the 4080th Wing would be there to participate in the ceremonies for this distinguished individual. Well, you know a lot of times we talk around in circles on these things, of course, who was this important individual? Well it could be anybody from my boss up through the President as far as I was concerned. But I certainly got the word back being relayed from CINCSAC that he wanted me and a certain number of people, I believe it was approximately 40, to go to Homestead and meet this important individual. And there was to be a U-2 involved in a static display with the B camera configuration which it carried in the Cuban Crisis, as well as a short briefing on what our accomplishments to date had been. Well the word soon got to my commander, who at that time was General Ryan at Second Air Force, and General Ryan sent his own airplane to Laughlin to pick us up in the early morning, the following morning, and carry us to Homestead. When I got there, I found out that General Sweeney, Commander of TAC, was in charge of the preparations for this event that was to take place. There's some interesting sidelights



on this thing. As an example he called me in with his staff and told me what he wanted. We were going to put the U-2 out in the center of the aircraft display on the ramp, until we got a call from Washington and they said no sir, by no means would the U-2 be there, you can put any other airplanes out there, but the U-2 would be in a hangar. Well during the night, I might say that I stayed up that night because we had to clear this hangar, and when I found out who that very important person was, although it wasn't my hangar, I made sure that that hangar was clean, where my airplane was going to be. And we shined it up and put it in there during the night and he wanted to talk to a few my crews, so it was decided that they should be in flying uniforms, flying coveralls. Well we hadn't anticipated this, so I made 'em wake up the necessary people on the base to get new flying coveralls. And then we scrounged around and got enough 4080th Wing insignia and patches and I told them to go find some lady, somewhere, who knew how to sew, during the night, to sew those patches on for them. I was trying to get them spruced up for the occasion. And we all carried our normal uniform hats down there, the one with the visor on it, and when we got there we found out that the other people involved which constituted a majority to my little 40, group of 40, all had flight caps. So we had to find out where we were going to get flight caps. Well unfortunately they didn't have the quantity and the sizes that were required for my group and I've got to admit that we looked less than desirable because of this. We all got brand new flight caps, mine was too small but I made out with it, and this same applied to a lot of other people. We worked most of the night with this type of detail, getting ready for the arrival of the President the next day. We were in formation, the 4080th contingent, along with the TAC Recce Wing, who also was recognized by the President that day with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Accompanying the President was members of his staff and cabinet, the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Power, the Commander in Chief of SAC was there, high ranking Naval officers, like CINCLANT and people like that who were involved in this Cuban situation. And if I'm not mistaken, I think the President's secretary or what's his name, just ran for Congressman, Senator out in California, Pierre Salinger, actually was carrying the citations that accompanied the awards and General, the President's Air Force Aide,

actually assisted him in the presentation. But he arrived, and I would also like to add there were two air loads of new media, practically everybody that's known around the country as a commentator or a writer, was present. It was indeed an impressive affair. They had a flyover by TAC fighters and this type of business and there were many, many people there and it was indeed an impressive affair. Well, as far as my association with the President was concerned, he came to a position immediately in front of the two contingents, the 4080th contingent and the TAC Wing contingent, and he made a prepared speech. I say prepared because after he made the speech they handed out copies of it, I'm not saying that he read it, it gave it orally. And he made a few interesting quips in his presentation by looking at us and saying "I would like to add that you gentlemen take very excellent pictures, I know because I've seen them." And then he also made some very strong statements, one of which was most impressive, he said "that this group of people had done as much for the country and the freedom of the free world as any group of men in history." Or words to that effect. Then he came around and he came to my position first and I saluted him and recognized him and he introduced himself, he shook hands with me, and told me a few words about how much he and the country appreciated the work that my people had done. And then he asked me if Major Anderson belonged to my outfit, what he was asking really was which of these two groups is the U-2 group, and when he found out that we were the U-2 outfit, he asked about Major Anderson, his wife, and his children and I talked to him about that. He put the streamer on the wing flag which was there in the corner, and gave us the award, and shook my hand and left. And then, I already knew that he was going to take a tour through this hangar, so when he left, well I beelined for the hangar and soon was in position with three of my pilots in front of the U-2. It was actually here in the hangar where I really talked personally to the President about the consequences of the 4080th Wing. I first introduced him to the three pilots I had who were Major Brown, Captain McIlmoyle and Captain Bull, and he spoke to each one of them and asked them where they were from and this type of thing, how many sorties they'd flown. So he talked briefly with each of them, and then I showed him the B configuration which we had underneath the U-2. Told him that this little piece of equipment here is really

what's done the job. And then I had a briefing there in which I showed him how many feet of film we had exposed over Cuba, how much electronic tape we'd exposed, how many sorties we'd flown, this type of thing. He was very personable and continually expressed his gratitude and that of the country for the work that had been done. It was very impressive, of course, for a person of my stature, to be in the presence of the President of the United States so naturally I was very impressed with him but I'd also like to say that I was extremely proud of my people in my unit and I tried to convey to him, not overly, but as a minimum I tried to convey to him that we were proud of what we had done and we intended to keep on doing it. And I hope I conveyed that to him.

Mr. Caywood: I'm sure this was a very proud moment in your career, Col Des Portes, as well as the crewmen who were there with you.

Col Des Portes: Yes, it was indeed a privilege for all of us and by the same token I think it was a real tribute, if that's the correct word to use, to the wing and its people to have such a distinguished group headed by the President of the United States that was there to pay their respects and I'd like to say that after the President left, each member of the Joint Chief of Staff and the other high-ranking dignitaries who accompanied the President, in turn, came by and extended their congratulations.

Mr. Caywood: Col Des Portes, would you comment on special aspects of training given to U-2 pilots to prepare them for possible capture by a hostile nation?

Col Des Portes: Yes sir, I'll comment generally on that. As you know all SAC crews are required to attend survival training which is set up specifically for this purpose. My U-2 crews, I might say, are honor graduates for such training and they receive additional training and instructions which are more or less pointed at the question that you asked. The details of how they are prepared for possible capture by a hostile nation I won't go into except to say that instructions are very definitely complied with in this regard prior to their operational sorties.

Mr. Caywood: This training, Col Des Portes, also includes that they be given special equipment, does it not?

Col Des Portes: Well their special equipment, we talk about survival equipment, certainly that's a primary part of their equipment that they carry. It's to enable them to survive. As far as this equipment relates to capture or escape, I'm not going to comment on that because the primary equipment that they have with them is designed to enable that man to survive.

Mr. Caywood: I understand. Col Des Portes, this is another question somewhat along similar lines. What precautions are taken to lessen the possibilities of pilots overflying territory when such missions are unauthorized by proper United States authorities?

Col Des Portes: Well once again, this is a very sensitive area. These people are briefed and the missions are planned that minimize, absolutely minimize the possibility of this type of occurrence ever coming to pass. We have special means of monitoring these flights and of course our own equipment determines when they are about to get into any trouble and at that time these people are given abort instructions, or return instructions to keep such a thing from occurring.

Mr. Caywood: One more aspect here in regard to this sensitive activity of your wing. What precautions are taken to protect pilots should they find themselves in high altitude nuclear fallout sampling?

Col Des Portes: There are no specific precautions taken. If in the normal read patterns of radiation that are in the atmosphere, we believe and are advised by the experts, a man can sustain this type of exposure until the placards that we have on him indicate that he has received an excessive amount. Should that occur, we take that man off of that type of activity. If you're referring to an atomic blast, a nuclear blast, there's no way for him to survive that except to avoid it and not receive excessive radiation. But if he's exposed to it, there's nothing in the aircraft or in his equipment which will enable him to survive.

Mr. Caywood: Yes. Col Des Portes, in earlier conversations that I have had with you, we had one of your pilots comment on British reaction to U-2 operations during the USSR nuclear testings and in the worldwide press, especially the area where there are hostile implications given to U-2 pilots. I was wondering do U-2 pilots receive more frequent physical examinations or undergo any kind of recheck phycologically or any kind of medical aspects that might be of interest here?

Col Des Poretes: Yes sir, I'm glad you brought that area up. To begin with, a U-2 pilot is subject to more critical and stringent physical examinations than is the average pilot. I'm not going to compare him with an astronaut because in the most recent years the astronaut program, I would assume that they represent the epitome of medical examinees, if that's the word. But the U-2 pilot is very definitely observed physcologically, physiologically on a more frequent basis than any of his counterparts today. When he first gets into this program, they go over to San Antonio to the Brooks Hospital there and they are subjected to the best physical or the deepest looking physical that the Air Force has. And as you know, we keep flight surgeons with the U-2 program and a pilot is given a limited physical before every U-2 sortie. I say limited, his blood pressure, his pulse, his temperature, his weight, his activities for the previous 12 hours, and these kind of things are examined and recorded. And the flight surgeon can tell, on a man who has been with us over a period of time, when the least little thing is out of tolerance with him. I know in my own case, when I first came into the program, they scared me to death on the type of EKG that we have to take. Mine deviated from the norm in a certain part of this exercise and examination which later was found out not to be anything at all, but I'm pointing this out to show that the average Air Force pilot would never be subjected to this. In a sense you can say these people are sort of jeopardized by being exposed to this deep a looking physical. On the other hand, if there is something wrong with them it might enable them to live a longer life than had it not been discovered. But the requirements are real stringent and these flight surgeons have a file on each of my pilots and myself and my staff and they probably know more about us than we know about ourselves.

Mr. Caywood: Yes. Col Des Portes, this unusually deep examination procedure, physically, this also include the stability of your pilots from a psycological point of view too, I would presume?

Col Des Portes: Absolutely, yes sir. This is a part of it and once again as close knit as the 4080th is, an individual's emotions and some of his behavior in many cases can be traced to his family, his dependents, his wife or children, or something of this nature, and I feel that within

this group of people that my flight surgeons have a real keen knowledge of the whole individual and his family. As far as stability, human reliability, these types of things, I think we really know what we have in these people.

Mr. Caywood: Well to pursue that one step further, Col Des Portes, to my knowledge, and I'm quite well acquainted with your wing because we do receive intensive historical coverage from you regularly, you have never experienced any security violations or any adverse reactions from your pilots in any way, have you?

Col Des Portes: No sir, I don't believe that I can recount a single incident where this has happened. I'd like to state that this is one of our big responsibilities in the wing and it's a continuing one. We continue to get new people, and old people have a habit of becoming lax. So this is one subject that we all, as individuals and as a group, work on continuously to maintain the security that we have to maintain to keep from degrading our capability or compromising that which should not be compromised.

Mr. Caywood: In other words, without in any way having a so-called spying system, your people are certainly strongly internally motivated to maintain their own security among themselves.

Col Des Portes: That's absolutely correct. I feel that there's a sense of integrity among these people in that regard that is commendable. I know from personal experience, of many cases where perhaps a wife had a seriously ill son or a child or something of this order, and she would come to me for a solution to her problem because she did not know where her husband was. She knew that I knew where he was, and what he was doing, so that I could decide for her whether his mission was of such importance that he should not be informed or he could not be informed or whether I could call him home or make disposition on the case. From this constant association with these people, I know that as a general statement they are of the highest, they have the highest order of integrity in this regard.

Mr. Caywood: Well I think from the standpoint of national security that we feel very proud of an organization like this, that regardless of some nations' propaganda try to get us to believe, the true story is what you've told us here in regard to the security aspects of your organization.



Col Des Portes: Yes sir, as I've said once before in talking to you, I'm happy that I have this opportunity of talking to you, and having some of these facts or opinions recorded because I think it would be when security allows the story of some of the deeds of the 4080th Wing and some of its people to be told, I think they deserve for them to be told. Because otherwise it would be something that's lost to public recognition or at least, I know if I was a son of one of these U-2 pilots, that some day or another I'd like to know something about what my father did because I think it's worth knowing.

Mr. Caywood: Well I couldn't agree with you more, Col Des Portes. Col Des Portes, in our earlier conversations you commented on the potential of the U-2 especially in regard to advanced new stages of the art are coming along, but could you care to expand on this?

Col Des Portes: Yes, I could expand on it a little bit. When we were first addressing ourselves to the subject, I kept, I think I put the majority of my emphasis on photographics and probably electronic capability of the U-2 as a reconnaissance vehicle. I probably deemphasized more than I should the possibility of resumption of nuclear testing. I understand what the situation is in the world today as far as testing moratorium is concerned between us and Russia, but Red China is testing weapons, and it's not beyond imagination to see many other countries that are developing this capability in the immediate future. I mean in the next several years. And I know that there are other means of sampling, but when you consider what is available for this country to perform this mission above the tropo pause it would appear to me that it would be real smart to keep

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what the magic number is and I'm not trying to sell U-2s to the United States Air Force, but I do feel that if we have additional U-2s that we would be in a better position to respond to the mission of sampling which could easily be required on short notice and also to reemphasize what I said earlier about the photographic and electronics intelligence capabilities of the U-2, which might be applied to portions of the world where the U-2 can operate so much cheaper than some of the more sophisticated pieces of equipment that may be coming in, about which I have very little

knowledge.

Mr. Caywood: Yes. Col Des Portes I think that this is a very well-founded recommendation based simply on the national security if nothing else and would you say that if we had or if we keep U-2s in our inventory and they're not particularly needed at any one time for air sampling, are there other ways in which these U-2s can be utilized that would still make them a system worth retaining?

Col Des Portes: Oh yes. There are many other uses for a system like the U-2. You see, Lt Col Anadonian has a few U-2s out at Edwards, which are used as primarily test beds. He flies weather reconnaissance, over the eyes of hurricanes, he tests weather conditions by putting a data collecting equipment in his aircraft and flying for the benefit of the people who are interested in weather phenomena and this type of business. You can always, there are myriad of photographic requirement at all times within the zone of interior. One of my big projects is Gypsy Fiddle as I mentioned earlier in support of the SAC RBS system. We've had numerous requests from outside agencies to put different things into the 60-70,000 foot environment for test purposes. This runs all the way from gamma radiation, to test some systems, to calibration of equipment that scientists use in conjunctions with these space laboratories. There's all sorts of ancillary missions that a U-2 can perform, but I don't think you can justify procurement on the basis of these collective missions. I think you got to hand your hat on the real meat of the subject and that's a strong possibility of resumption of sampling, the fact that it can do a real yeoman's job over many portions of this universe, that we may have a very vested interest in, and then if these things don't come to pass, it could certainly still be used as a standby capability in this eventuality and do these lesser missions in the meantime.

Mr. Caywood: I understand, Col Des Portes, and to ask you one more question, in case that it is not the policy of higher headquarters to retain the U-2 in its inventory over an indefinite period of time, when, what time period would you actually, do you actually see the U-2 would have ceased to be in existence?

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present time, every indication is that there is no deterioration in the metal. Those systems which do deteriorate, are those parts which is primarily aircraft wiring, has been replaced in the last year, two years, so based on past performance, who knows, maybe it can go another eight years. There's certainly no indication to forecast the end of it.

Mr. Caywood: In other words, with proper maintenance why the U-2, the U-2's life could be indefinite from your viewpoint?

Col Des Portes: Well that's right. At least when I say indefinite I'm talking about four or five years, something on that order.

Mr. Caywood: From this date?

Col Des Portes: Yes sir.

Col Des Portes: This is Colonel Des Portes and I'm introducing Colonel Martinez who is currently commander of the 4028th Squadron. Colonel Martinez was originally in the Black Knight portion of the 4080th Wing which of course had to do with the RB-57s. And in accumulating this testimony for the sake of expanding the history, we didn't have but one or two people who are still with us who remember from first-hand experience, the RB-57 part of the program. So I'd like for you, Tony, to go ahead and fill in on what you know about the RB-57 program and some of your personal experiences.

Col Martinez: All right sir. The first operation that I'd like to speak about is one by the name of Border Town. It was one of three RB-57D2 aircraft from Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, and Brize Norton Royal Air Force Station, U.K. The package consisted of four flight crews, a commander and staff, and necessary support equipment. The ADVON departed Laughlin Air Force Base about the 10th of January 1959 via C-124 and proceeded without incident. The tactical aircraft departed at 0100 hours on the 17th of January at 30 second intervals, joining up in night formation for the flight across. The scheduled flight time to Brize Norton was 11 hours and 30 minutes, nonstop, with air refueling scheduled over Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio, and the second air refueling scheduled over Harmon Air Force Base, Newfoundland. That evening before engine start, or that morning I should say, five minutes before engine start, word was received that the first refueling was to be cancelled due to flooding conditions at Lockbourne Air Force Base and inability of the tankers to launch. However, the decision was made

to launch the tactical aircraft anyhow and overfly the first refueling area, make a go, no go decision over Loring Air Force Base. The flight departed Laughlin and on schedule and proceeded to a point over Loring without incident. Weather forecast for the refueling area and this refueling base was checked and deemed to be satisfactory. In communications with SAC Headquarters at that time, they advised that the tankers were airborne and would be on station. The decision to continue was made. The night refueling was accomplished with minor difficulties due to communications and also the number 3 RB-57 encountered difficulty in getting the AR receptacle door open. However, they all took on fuel. A maximum load. The flight for me, coast out point, to approximately one hour past the point of no return, was normal. At that time, number 3 aircraft reported oxygen supply commencing to run below the precomputed consumption curve. Immediate attempts were made at that time to relay the difficulty to rescue facilities via the ocean station that was nearby and other aircraft flying in the area. In the meantime, a close check was kept on the malfunctioning oxygen supply. It was calculated that the rate of consumption, the new rate of consumption, would necessitate a descent to 10,000 feet thus creating a fuel consumption problem in that he would not be able to reach land successfully. Following much panic and communications realy, a tanker and two air rescue aircraft were dispatched from the U.K. to intercept the RB-57 in distress. Successful rendezvous was made about 400 miles off the west coast of Scotland. A max on-load was taken and the aircraft continued on to Brize Norton at 10,000 feet due to no oxygen. That particular aircraft landed at Brize RAF Station in 12 hours and 55 minutes after takeoff from Laughlin. Meantime the flight leader in the number 2 aircraft had touched down at 11 hours and 25 minutes after departing Laughlin. The mission was in place at Brize. Our mission there was to conduct perpherial high altitude electronic reconnaissance of the Soviet Bloc countries bordering the Baltic Sea and East Germany. All sorties were to be flown at night to decrease the probability of detection and intercept. Sortie duration there was an average of about 6 hours and 30 minutes. Command and control of the operation there was exercised by Seventh Air Division. This operation remained in place for about 70 days and flew over 30 successful



sorties in these two areas. All crewmembers were awarded field spot promotions and air medals for the deployment and tactical missions. The deployment took place on 1 April and all, the whole party was back at Laughlin by the 10th of April to conclude operation Border Town. Another operation that the RB-57D2s took part in was one year later. It was January 1960. This operation was called Dip Stick. This was

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January 1960 and arrived at Brize Norton 36 hours later via C-124. Their job was to stage the tactical aircraft through Brize on the way to Adana. The tactical aircraft, three RB-57D2s, departed Laughlin 22 January 1960, staged through Loring and Brize Norton and arrived Adana 26 January 1960. Air refueling was conducted over Harmon out of Loring on the second leg only. Each aircraft logged approximately 18 hours each for the entire deployment phase. Now the covert deployment was considered a complete success as all flight plans were suppressed and considerable precautions had been taken to conceal the movement of these aircraft into the Middle East. We'd never been there before. However, a few days after arrival at Adana, a Moscow radio broadcast was heard there in the Officer's Club which welcomed the 4080th Strat Wing and Col Gregory, the commander, to the Middle East and Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. Even went so far as to mention the three aircraft by tail numbers. We thought this was pretty comical at the time. However, it had serious overtones. Accommodations at Incirlik were very primitive and the entire base was extremely crowded. Eventually the combat crews were moved into two-man rooms and duty became a little more tolerable from such an insignificant change as this. The mission in place at Incirlik was to conduct peripheral high altitude electronic reconnaissance of Soviet Bloc countries bordering the Black Sea. All sorties were planned to be flown at night with the additional requirement of low ceilings at airfields near and in the area of interest, with less than a quarter moon showing to minimize the risks of intercept and incidents. More than 20 successful sorties were flown during the months of February and March 1960. The weather restrictions contributed greatly to the cancellations and postponements. Aircraft and equipment operated quite satisfactorily.



Sortie duration average, for these sorties, was approximately 5 hours and 30 minutes. My command and control exercised over this operation was TUSLOG, came from TUSLOG Det 50 which was in place at Adana. This operation remained in place for approximately 60 days. In the first part of April, a movement directive was received directing the movement of the entire force to Brize Norton for a period of 30 days to conduct peripheral reconnaissance of the Bloc countries bordering the Baltic and East Germany, very much the same as Border Town the previous year. The move to Brize Norton commenced a few days later. A few sidelights here, as to how the movement took place can be shown by some examples here. First of all, the logistics of the move were computed and a request for approximately four C-124s was made to Sixteenth Air Force, Torrejon. All cargo and personnel were designated, processed, and briefed for each load. Thirty-six hours after this was complete the commander was advised that C-124s were not available in the European area to fit the timing required. Therefore instructions were received to plan the deployment using eight C-119 aircraft. These aircraft were launched from the troop carrier wing at Evereux, France. Five aircraft arrived at Adana 20 hours later. Three aircraft had encountered maintenance difficulties en route and were delayed at Athens and Naples. A complete reshuffling of the loads was necessary to fit into the C-119s. However, it was accomplished and we were ready to go. Now the en route team commander and ten airmen were launched from Adana on or about the 9th of April on the first C-119. The plan here was to fly to Torrejon, Spain, via Athens and Naples and prepare to stage the three tactical birds through Torrejon en route to Brize Norton RAF Station, U.K. The second C-119 departed approximately one hour behind the first, with a load of cargo, two officers and 12 airmen. They were scheduled to land at Torrejon via Athens and Naples and augment the en route team. The personnel aboard were PSD people, air police, security guards, and those other necessary for the en route team mission. When this aircraft was approximately 20 minutes from a coast-in point on the southeast coast of Southern Italy south of Brindisi, the number 2 engine developed an overspeed condition and had to be feathered. Unable to hold altitude with one engine, the pilot headed for the beach and alerted all passengers to jump as soon as they were over the beach. The first man left

the aircraft at approximately 1500 feet above the ground and the last man at approximately 800 feet above the ground. All chutes opened successfully, landings were made and a few injuries were incurred. Just to name a few, Sergeant Watson, PSD suffered a broken ankle when he landed on top of concrete fence. Another airman, an A&E man, suffered lacerations about the arms and legs when he crashed through the roof of an outhouse and several others landed in barnyards and front porches. Captain Mattarocha, the detachment navigator, landed on top of a two story building, apparently unscathed, but he rolled off the roof and received a broken back. The visibility was less than a mile and in rain and darkness was approaching, therefore it was quite some time before all the personnel were accounted for. Captain Barlow was the other officer that bailed out of the airplane and had been the last one out, received minor injuries and took command of the search and accounted for the injuries. All personnel were taken to an Italian military hospital in Toronto which is more than 60 miles to the west of the bailout point. In the meantime, the en route commander had landed at Naples and was advised of the accident. Immediately a message was sent to Sixteenth Air Force and Colonel Gregory to delay the deployment of the tactical birds due to the accident. Thirty-six hours later the C-119s were taken off the deployment and replaced with C-124s that arrived and the rest of the deployment came off without incident. I remained at Naples at the U.S. Naval Auxiliary Air Station until all personnel were returned to U.S. control except for Captain Mattarocha and he remained in the hospital for about five weeks before we saw him again. An inventory of equipment upon arrival at Brize disclosed that the same C-119 that was beached and salvaged at, near Brindisi contained several spare pressure suits, autopilot test equipment, and aircraft MSKs. So we were obviously out of business for a while at Brize. However, we were augmented from Laughlin and Warner Robins and within about seven days we were ready to operate again. In place at Brize, we flew only about ten sorties during that 30 days period due to weather. These were all in the Baltic and East German border periphery reconnaissance. The troops were getting pretty weary and prospects of redeployment were not too good, the weather wasn't helping very much. However, on the 28th of April, instructions were received to redeploy, C-124s were used for support all the way. The



tactical aircraft departed in formation 30 April, via refueling over the Azores and staged through Dow Air Force Base. They landed at Laughlin on the first of May with a first class reception from the families and the commanders. And that closed a chapter in the RB-57D2s in the 4080th.

Col Des Portes: Thank you very much Tony. You have a few remarks to make about why the RB-57s were phased out?

Col Martinez: Well the B-57s at that time, which there were only six of these electronic reconnaissance types, had been over there, as I mentioned, twice. However, it was found that it was more economical to operate with another aircraft, different type of equipment and with one man, and the 57s were put in storage at that time for that reason.

Col Des Portes: In other words, it was decided the U-2 could do the job more economically than the RB-57.

Col Martinez: Yes sir.

Col Des Portes: And what happened to you then? Tell a little bit about what happened to the RB-57 people including yourself.

Col Martinez: All right. Well sir, I'll start off here with the commander, Colonel Guerry, went off to another assignment and I haven't kept too much track of him. The three crews, four crews I should say, that went off on the first deployment and went off on the second one also, I'll start off with the first crew. Captain Abrams and Captain Rory, when we broke up at Laughlin, Abrams went to 135s at Wurtsmith, and Captain Rory went to B-52s at Wurtsmith, he is the wing ECM officer there now. Captain Marsh and Captain Blum made up the other crew, Captain Marsh went to KC-135s at Wurtsmith and Captain Blum was transferred to the 544th and went to Alaska and ran a detachment up there for a number of years and did an outstanding job. Where he is now, I don't know. Captain Martino, the third crew, went to KC-135s and he went to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and is now flying 135s out of Alaska. Very much the same thing he was doing in those days. Captain Richards, Captain Martino's EWO, went to B-58s and he's in the 43d Bomb Wing at Little Rock today. And as for my crew, my observer, Major Avadon, went to Carswell to B-52s and was wing ECM officer and later an instructor at Roswell at Walker Air Force Base and is now wing ECM officer at Abilene, Dyess. So they're spread all over. And to answer your question, Col Des Portes, myself when I left the 4025th Squadron I went to the 4028th

Squadron and flew as a combat crew in the U-2 for approximately six months. And then Col Curdy, the commander of the squadron, took me off combat crew and made me the squadron operations officer. And I served as squadron operations officer until about November of '62 at which time I was moved up to wing to be Col Jackson's assistant as wing DCO. And I remained there until July of '64 when I was given the 4028th Squadron, the U-2 squadron. And that brings us up to date sir.

Col Des Portes: All right. Well thank you very much for this information Tony. I believe that plus previous testimony, we had Chuck Stratton in and he talked about one of the specific deployments with the RB-57s and I believe with your testimony that about brings us up to speed on the Black Knight part of this 4080th history. Thank you very much.